

# ***2004-2005 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program***

## ***U.S. Department of Education***

### **Cover Sheet**

Type of School: ☒ Elementary ☒ Middle ☐ High ☐ K-12

Name of Principal **Mrs. Linda Earp**

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name **Palmer Catholic Academy**

(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address **4889 Palm Valley Road**

(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address)

**Ponte Vedra Beach**

**Florida**

**32082-3617**

City

State

Zip Code+4 (9 digits total)

County **St. Johns County**

School Code Number\*

**N/A**

Telephone ( **904** ) **543-8515**

Fax ( **904** ) **543-8750**

Website/URL **www.palmercatholic.org**

E-mail **princpalpca@hotmail.com**

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Superintendent\* **Mrs. Patricia Tierney**

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name **Diocese of St. Augustine**

Tel. ( **904** ) **262-3200**

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Board

**Mrs. Alyce Greider Decker**

President/Chairperson \_\_\_\_\_

(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this package, including the eligibility requirements on page 2, and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

**[Include this page in the school's application as page 2.]**

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes grades K-12. (Schools with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has not been in school improvement status or been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's adequate yearly progress requirement in the 2004-2005 school year.
3. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, it has foreign language as a part of its core curriculum.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 1999 and has not received the 2003 or 2004 *No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools Award*.
5. The nominated school or district is not refusing the OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
6. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if the OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
7. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school, or the school district as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
8. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:
 

\_\_\_\_\_ Elementary schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Middle schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Junior high schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ High schools  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Other  
  
 \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL
  
2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
 

☐ Urban or large central city  
☐ Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area  
☒ Suburban  
☐ Small city or town in a rural area  
☐ Rural
  
4. \_\_\_\_\_ 9 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?
  
5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total		Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK					7	28	24	52
K	16	35	51		8	18	19	37
1	28	22	50		9			
2	27	23	50		10			
3	18	23	41		11			
4	24	27	51		12			
5	28	20	48		Other			
6	23	16	39					
TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL →								419

[Throughout the document, round numbers to avoid decimals.]

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:
- |             |                                  |
|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 95          | % White                          |
| 0.25        | % Black or African American      |
| 4           | % Hispanic or Latino             |
| 0.75        | % Asian/Pacific Islander         |
| _____       | % American Indian/Alaskan Native |
| <b>100%</b> | <b>Total</b>                     |

Use only the five standard categories in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of the school.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 2.4 %

(This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.)

<b>(1)</b>	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	<b>7</b>
<b>(2)</b>	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	<b>3</b>
<b>(3)</b>	Subtotal of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	<b>10</b>
<b>(4)</b>	Total number of students in the school as of October 1 (same as in #5 above)	<b>415</b>
<b>(5)</b>	Subtotal in row (3) divided by total in row (4)	<b>0.024</b>
<b>(6)</b>	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	<b>2.4</b>

8. Limited English Proficient students in the school: 0 %  
0 Total Number Limited English Proficient

Number of languages represented: n/a  
Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families or the school does not participate in the federally-supported lunch program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: .012 %  
5 Total Number of Students Served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

<u>    </u> Autism	<u>    </u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>    </u> Deafness	<u>  1  </u> Other Health Impaired
<u>    </u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>  3  </u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>    </u> Hearing Impairment	<u>  1  </u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>    </u> Mental Retardation	<u>    </u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>    </u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>    </u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

**Number of Staff**

	<u><b>Full-time</b></u>	<u><b>Part-Time</b></u>
Administrator(s)	<u>  1  </u>	<u>  1  </u>
Classroom teachers	<u> 18 </u>	<u>  1 </u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>  6 </u>	<u>  1 </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>  8 </u>	<u>  0 </u>
Support staff	<u>  4 </u>	<u>  4 </u>
Total number	<u> 37 </u>	<u>  7 </u>

12. Average school student-“classroom teacher” ratio:  16:1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. The student dropout rate is defined by the state. The student drop-off rate is the difference between the number of entering students and the number of exiting students from the same cohort. (From the same cohort, subtract the number of exiting students from the number of entering students; divide that number by the number of entering students; multiply by 100 to get the percentage drop-off rate.) Briefly explain in 100 words or fewer any major discrepancy between the dropout rate and the drop-off rate. (Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates and only high schools need to supply drop-off rates.)

	2004-2005	2003-2004	2002-2003	2001-2002	2000-2001
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	98%	98%	98%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	96%	96%	97%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	7 %	10 %	6 %	16%	8%
Student dropout rate (middle/high)	0 %	0 %	0 %	0%	0%
Student drop-off rate (high school)	%	%	%	%	%

14. (**High Schools Only**) Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2004 are doing as of September 2004.

Graduating class size	_____
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____ %
Enrolled in a community college	_____ %
Enrolled in vocational training	_____ %
Found employment	_____ %
Military service	_____ %
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	_____ %
Unknown	_____ %
<b>Total</b>	100 %

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## PART III - SUMMARY

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Palmer Catholic Academy is the parish school of Our Lady Star of the Sea Catholic Church in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. Palmer Catholic serves students in Kindergarten through Eighth grade. The current enrollment is 419 students coming from 250 families and two different Florida counties. In addition, Palmer has an affiliate preschool and provides after-school care.

Palmer Catholic employs 44 faculty and staff members. All full-time classroom teachers are certified through the State of Florida Department of Education. All Enrichment teachers have obtained or surpassed the degree and/or qualification required by the Florida Catholic Conference, the Accreditation Committee, and the Diocese of St. Augustine.

Palmer Catholic Academy received an A+ accreditation from the Florida Catholic Conference in 2003, and is a member of the Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Augustine School System, and the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA).

The mission of Palmer Catholic Academy is to provide the foundation for academic excellence in a caring, safe, Christ-centered environment. The goal is to motivate each child to develop sound Catholic values for future success, and to promote a community of believers, learners, and active doers.

Palmer Catholic Academy first opened its doors in 1997. The school began with one Kindergarten class of 20 students. The following year, 1998-1999, Palmer added a first and second grade. Six years later, as a result of the commitment of dedicated teachers, administrators, and a very active Home and School Association, the school has grown to two classes in each of nine grade levels, K-8, and an enrollment of 419. Palmer, young as it is, has become an energetic and vital part of the Ponte Vedra community, offering high-quality Catholic education and social outreach.

Palmer Catholic Academy presently occupies a 38,000 square foot facility at 4889 Palm Valley Road in Ponte Vedra, Florida. The facility was built in 1999 and an addition was added in 2001. The facility includes offices, 18 classrooms, a science lab, art room, music room, chapel, and media center including the computer lab and library. The property includes a playground, basketball court, and a playing field.

This year, Palmer Catholic Academy's average composite scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for grades third through eighth place us above the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of national school norms for each grade. Palmer Catholic's strong academic achievement is linked to high expectations, and a strong curriculum based on the Florida Sunshine State and National Standards, delivered by highly qualified and dedicated teachers.

Since its inception, Palmer Catholic Academy has striven to provide each child the opportunity, skills and tools to achieve personal academic excellence and to develop a commitment to lifelong learning and community service. In doing so, PCA fosters an environment that encourages teamwork and a family atmosphere. This has translated into a school that achieves at an excellent level and serves as a model for the surrounding community.

## **PART IV – INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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1. Palmer assesses reading and mathematics performance in grades 3-8 with the Iowa Test of Basic Skills. The ITBS has three main uses at Palmer. First, it lets Palmer compare its school performance with that of the nation. Second, it lets Palmer compare its own performance year-to-year. Third, it helps Palmer identify how each individual student is performing.

All testing takes place in a normal classroom environment. No large subgroups are tested. This year, two sixth grade students were tested in the guidance office to accommodate their need for testing in a small group setting. No other student or time accommodations were made.

The ITBS is administered in the Fall each year and measures how well Palmer students have learned the basic knowledge and skills taught in elementary and middle schools nationwide. ITBS results are categorized by subject for each grade level, and compare Palmer scores with national norms. The results are also scored for individual students for each subject tested. In one analysis of results, we use the Percentile Rank of Average Student Scores: National Norms in Reading and Math. For example, this year, the Palmer 8<sup>th</sup> grade Percentile Rank of Average SS: in Reading is 87. This means that, in the school year 2004-2005, the Palmer 8<sup>th</sup> grade scored higher than 87% of students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade nationwide. This statistic provides Palmer Testing Committee and the principal with information about how our school performs by grade level in comparison to other schools nationally. This type of statistic is provided for each grade level, in each subject area, and each section of the subject area (for example: Mathematics – Concepts and Estimation). An analysis of Palmer's results shows that all grade levels in the school are consistently well above average in all subject areas. The yearly scores are used to support and evaluate the school curriculum and instruction, target strengths and weaknesses, and adjust teaching methods and resources as needed. For example, Reading (Vocabulary and Comprehension) is an area of strength across all grade levels. Spelling is targeted to be improved in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades. Improving Punctuation and Capitalization is targeted for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Mathematics is also an area of strength for Palmer. However, Computation is targeted for improvement in all but 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

Palmer Testing Committee and administration will also compare the current year Palmer grade level ITBS scores with past years to determine if changes made to teaching methods, curriculum, and resource materials have been beneficial. For example, 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading scores show an increase in the Percentile Rank of Average SS: National Norms in Reading for each year since 2001-2002. The ranks are as follows: 2001-2002=75%, 2002-2003=81%, 2003-2004=83%, and 2004-2005=87%. The Testing Committee recommendations during the 2001-2002 year were to change to the Houghton Mifflin English Series, increase vocabulary and grammar instruction, and introduce more novel studies to improve comprehension. Each successive year, ITBS results indicated that these recommendations were valid. Last year, the testing committee recommended the inclusion of more poems and plays in the curriculum. This year, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Reading NPR went from 83% to 87%.

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade Math scores are as follows: 2001-2002= 72%, 2002-2003 =64%, 2003-2004 = 77%, and 2004-2005 = 81%. In an effort to improve Math scores in the 2002-2003 school year, a software program, Accelerated Math, was purchased and used in place of traditional textbooks. The following

year, scores went down. The decision was made to use the Accelerated Math program as an enrichment and remedial resource, and reintroduce the use of the traditional textbook. The test results improved dramatically in 2003-2004 (77%) and again in 2004-2005 (81%). Each year the testing committee and the curriculum committee closely review ITBS Math scores and make decisions about the use of materials and methods used to teach math.

In addition, classroom teachers, and the principal will examine each student's score to determine which students may need special help, accommodations, or tutoring.

Complete ITBS scores are made available to the diocese, principal, classroom teachers, and the Palmer testing committee. Individual student scores are supplied to each student and his/her parents, and the overall school summaries are available to parents for viewing at the school.

It should be noted that Palmer considers the ITBS scores to be just one indicator of its successes, and a jumping off place for the development of the curriculum.

2. Palmer has an established Testing Committee that reads and interprets ITBS results. Fall ITBS scores are reviewed and a report prepared listing grade level performances by subject, identifying areas of strength and areas to target for improvement. The goal of the assessment and review is to identify instructional practices and resources that are providing successful results, and those that need revising. Ultimately, the committee strives to improve the overall educational experience of the students and the school as a whole.

During the 2003-2004 school year, several overall goals were identified. They included:

1. Continue to improve spelling scores with rule-based spelling instruction.
2. Implement a new math program that is a more traditional approach, textbook based, and homogeneous throughout all grade levels. Continue to work to improve math computation skills.
3. Use maps, graphs, diagrams, and reference materials school-wide in all subject areas with a particular focus in middle school science.
4. Encourage the use of the SRA program.
5. Post ITBS Testing results report on the teacher server so all teachers can easily access Testing Committee recommendations.
- 6.

An example of how the general goals listed above were then applied to specific grade levels and subject areas follows:

Fourth Grade – Math: It is anticipated that the problem solving, data interpretation and computation categories will rise due to a change in the current math curriculum. Palmer is presently looking for a new math series that will unify the math program across all grade levels using a consistent textbook-based curriculum. Students should benefit from the extra practice in problem solving, data interpretation, and computation provided in the new math program. It is recommended that the current program, Accelerated Math, be used for enrichment and remediation, and that data interpretation should be covered in subject areas beyond math.

Sixth Grade – Reading: The 6<sup>th</sup> grade Reading scores meet the Palmer testing goals therefore it is recommended that the use of novel studies, vocabulary work within the novels, comprehension essays, quality book reports, projects, and monthly reading genres be continued. The use of Vocabulary Workshop should also be continued.

3. Palmer Catholic student performance is communicated in a timely manner to students and parents in



traditional ways such as parent-teacher conferences, interim reports and report cards; and in other ways such as red folders filled with daily student work, annual portfolios of student work, drama presentations, and classroom and hallway displays of student work. The community is made aware of student performance through a Thursday Update newsletter, Parish open house, and monthly Home School Association meetings. Families considering enrolling their children in Palmer, can view the website ([www.palmercatholic.org](http://www.palmercatholic.org)). Special Palmer performance results, such the school's A+ accreditation, and student academic awards, are also communicated to the community by the church pastor during Friday and Sunday morning Masses.

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills is distributed to individual students and parents with an explanation of how to interpret the student results. Parents needing help understanding results are directed to schedule parent-teacher meetings. ITBS results are also announced at the Home School Association meeting following a meeting of the principal and the guidance counselor to review results, and the compilation of the Testing committee report. The school results and the report of the Testing Committee are made available year-round to parents and the community in the Palmer front office. Test results for each year are included in a binder so that parents may examine prior years and note the positive progression of testing results.

In addition, the ITBS results and Testing Committee report are available on the Palmer Teacher's server and plans have been made for publishing them on the Palmer website.

The Diocese is made aware of student performance by the principal's regular contact with the superintendent of schools, and with other principals during monthly principal meetings. Also, the Diocesan newsletter, Dabbles ([www.dosaedu.org](http://www.dosaedu.org)), publishes articles about Palmer's activities and curriculum.

A new admissions brochure that will highlight student academic success and Palmer's ITBS scores is presently being prepared for next year's distribution.

**4.** One important way Palmer shares its success is through Diocesan In-service meetings. Two times yearly, Palmer staff attends all-day general and subject area meetings with all Diocesan teachers. Time is allocated for sharing ideas and lesson plans, and revising the curriculum guide. In this way, Palmer teachers have been instrumental in more closely aligning the Diocesan standards to the Florida Sunshine State Standards and the National Standards.

Palmer teachers also facilitate Diocesan meetings. The last Technology meeting was held in Palmer's computer lab and facilitated by our Technology teacher (the Chair of the Technology Advisory Committee for the Diocese of St. Augustine).

Our teachers seek to establish professional relationships and share information with other teachers and administrators from all parts of Florida and the nation by attending professional meetings and conferences.

The school communicates its successes through the Diocesan newsletter, the school-based Thursday Update Newsletter, and the Palmer website. ([www.palmercatholic.org](http://www.palmercatholic.org)) Palmer has a parent volunteer in charge of publicizing community outreach programs, student service, and school events in up to three local newspapers on a regular basis.

The principal shares Palmer's successes through monthly principal meetings. In community relationships established by the principal and HSA, businesses are made aware of Palmer's activities and high achievement. As a result, businesses support the school in many ways. One example is the new SCRIP program begun this year. Businesses donate to the school a monetary portion of everything purchased in

their establishment by participating SCRIP families.

Even Palmer students share their successes. Recently, students read a book on cassette tape and then donated the books and the tapes to students at a school without the necessary budget to purchase books on tape. Local individuals and businesses benefit from the service of the students and learn about our school through our middle school student service hours requirement. Knowing the importance of a well-supplied school, students collected money to aid the hurricane victims in repurchasing books lost during the Florida storms. In the past year, Palmer has donated books to local schools in need, and textbooks to schools in West Nairobi, Kenya, Africa.

Finally, Palmer's goal is to become a model school for the community. Palmer's doors are always open to other schools that may wish to tour, gather ideas, and bring them home to share with their teachers and students.

## **PART V – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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1. Palmer determines goals and objectives by considering diocesan, state, and national standards, needs of the students, and the school's mission statement (See [www.dosaedu.org](http://www.dosaedu.org) and [www.palmercatholic.org](http://www.palmercatholic.org)).

Core curriculum is taught daily by highly qualified teachers and consists of Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Spanish (middle school) and Religion. Every effort is made to teach across the curriculum and relate subjects to one another. For example, TV production recently filmed the 7<sup>th</sup> grade performing original raps based on stories from reading class. This project combined Music, Language Arts and Technology, and provided students the opportunity to create and perform, and teachers an alternative means of assessing student performance.

Language Arts is taught everyday with heavy emphasis placed on phonics and whole language in the primary grades, and the study of literature in intermediate and middle school grades. Reading, comprehension, speech, grammar, usage, written composition, and a writing portfolio are part of the K-8 curriculum. Middle school also integrates writing instruction and analysis of the written word through novel study, creative writing, special projects, and presentations. Houghton-Mifflin curriculum materials are used.

All grades also use Houghton-Mifflin Mathematics curriculum. The program includes instruction in concepts, problem solving, and computation as well as hands-on and applied learning techniques. Math (K-2) is taught in 45 minute blocks combining large group instruction in a concept, with rotation through small group manipulative centers. Math is also incorporated into other areas of instruction. For example, Kindergarten uses the calendar to compute, graph, and add, and tracks the temperature on number lines. Grades 3-8 are taught in 45 minute blocks, and use textbooks and workbooks to introduce concepts and provide practice. Accelerated Math software is used to enhance the curriculum, and to provide enrichment and remediation. Accelerated Math is available on computers school wide and is also part of Computer instruction. AM allows teachers to produce assignments and tests that follow the Houghton-Mifflin scope and sequence. Middle School students are taught a 45 minute lesson in 6<sup>th</sup> grade math, 7<sup>th</sup> grade pre-Algebra, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Algebra every day. Instruction is differentiated to meet individual student needs. The focus is on applying math concepts to real-world situations.

The Science curriculum provides instruction in broad scientific concepts K-2, adds detail and scope to the concepts in 3-5, and specializes subject matter in middle school. Demonstration and experimentation are part of the hands-on approach.

Social Studies K-2 studies citizenship, families, community, seasons, people, and places. Grades 3-5 study historical civilizations, Florida and the Western Hemisphere. Sixth grade covers ancient civilizations to present day, 7<sup>th</sup> grade covers American History from its beginning to Reconstruction and 8<sup>th</sup> grade covers American History from Reconstruction to today.

All Palmer students receive Spanish instruction from a bilingual teacher 1 to 4 times per week. All Middle School students attend Spanish classes 4 times per week for half the year. The program is designed to develop, reinforce, and refine Spanish listening and speaking skills, and understanding of Spanish cultures. Textbooks used are Viva el Espanol (grades 4-6) and Juntas Uno (grades 7-8). The Spanish teacher frequently films her students conversing to allow them to evaluate their fluency and accent.

The Art program serves grades K-8 and teaches fundamental knowledge (elements, principles, color theory, etc.) hands-on studio experiences (drawing, painting, clay/pottery, collage, etc.) art history and analysis. Palmer's art curriculum introduces the primary level child to the basics, then repeats and expands knowledge, skills, and information throughout the ensuing grades. Students incorporate art appreciation, creative expression, and art skills into their frames of reference from an early age onward.

Library skills and information literacy classes are taught to grades K-6 once per week. Grades 7 and 8 are taught research skills on a flexible schedule, in collaboration with classroom teachers.

The Music curriculum includes a mix of theory, music history, singing and instrument instruction.

Computer (Paint, MS Word, Excel, Access, Power Point) and Physical Education (Sports, exercise) are taught to every student K-8. Depending on the grade level, subjects are taught 1 to 4 times per week.

Middle School students also attend an elective Exploratory class once a week.

**2a.** The reading curriculum at PCA integrates reading comprehension, writing, grammar, spelling and vocabulary and builds each year upon knowledge acquired in the grade prior. The goal of the program is to teach students to read with fluency and comprehension, to clearly communicate, and to develop a love of reading that will last through a lifetime of learning.

In grades K-2, heavy emphasis is placed on a blending of phonics and whole language theories. Classrooms are print-rich environments. Students are taught the basics of reading and writing through the Houghton Mifflin textbook series, the Great Source English series, stories with supporting activities, and D'Nealian handwriting. Individual writing portfolios follow students through each grade from kindergarten to eighth grade. Students are taught to read and restate the question in written answers. Each child is carefully monitored in the primary grades for their acquisition of reading and language arts skills.

In grades 3-5, students advance to the study of vocabulary, reading comprehension, written composition, grammar, punctuation, and cursive handwriting. Reading comprehension and vocabulary are mainly taught through novel studies and the Vocabulary Workshop series. Writing composition focuses on the organization and unity of a paragraph. Grammar covers the basics of the eight parts of speech presented in the Houghton Mifflin text and is enhanced through the use of a workbook. D'Nealian cursive is introduced. Oral presentations are introduced to foster communication skills. Intermediate students pair up with primary students as "Reading Buddies" on a weekly basis.

In grades 6-8, the focus of reading is to analyze literature and identify literary elements through the use of novel studies, poetry, plays and mythology. Vocabulary is taught through novel studies and the

Vocabulary Workshop series. Novels are selected for their relationship to school-wide curriculum, for their importance in the greater world of literature, for quality of writing, and for appeal to the student population. Writing instruction across the curriculum requires the student produce five paragraph essays based on the “Six Traits of Writing” in MLA format.

Students are required to research, read, and write on a variety of topics in all subject areas. Current periodicals and primary source documents are used. Research skills are taught in the classroom, library, and computer classes. The Houghton Mifflin series is used to teach grammar, syntax and punctuation. Oral and creative presentations are assigned to promote communication and creativity. Weekly visits to the library media center provide students the opportunity to choose quality literature and research materials.

**3.** The Social Studies program focuses on creating informed, thoughtful, compassionate, ethical, and free citizens who will avoid the mistakes of the past and make connections between the old and new world. Social Studies include the study of ethics, economics, history, geography, politics, and sociology. The student is taught to evaluate similarities and differences, concepts, causes and effects, his/her place in history and affect on the future, rather than mere facts.

Students study the relationships of human and animal families (K), home and school families (1), neighborhood and parish families (2), local community (3), Florida and Introduction to Geography (4), communities of the Western Hemisphere (5), communities of the Eastern Hemisphere (6), U.S. Civilization: 1000-Post Reconstruction (7), and U.S Civilization: Post-Reconstruction to the present.(8).

The Palmer student learns the importance of civic responsibility and of serving others. Each year, Palmer performs hundreds of hours of service for the school, church, community, and world. For example, Palmer students donated a cow to an African village through Heifer International, donated pet food to the Humane society, adopted a Meals on Wheels family, sent money for Thanksgiving dinners to the Jacksonville City Rescue Mission, wrote letters to servicemen overseas, and visited nursing homes during the holidays. Students donate money at Friday mass that is given to charity. In addition, middle school students are required to complete service hours in order to graduate.

Palmer also promotes special interdisciplinary projects that teach. For example, last year, students participated in a school-wide geography project called “Where in the World is Mrs. Earp?” Each class in the school was assigned a country to research and report on. Short skits were televised throughout the school about the country Mrs. Earp was “visiting” that day. The reports included such things as latitude and longitude, weather, language spoken and physical features. The students were required to guess the country based on the clues offered in the skit. Students were provided passports to record clues and track the countries “visited” by Mrs. Earp

The Social Studies program also invites guests to share their experiences. Last year, Henri Landwirth, Holocaust survivor and philanthropist, visited the school to discuss his experiences and his charity, Give Kids the World. Other important guests have been a group of Lost Boys from Sudan whom the school has adopted and supported during their transition to life in the United States. These kinds of visitors bring social studies to life and inspire students to accomplish great things.

**4.** Palmer teachers truly care about their students. PCA teachers begin the instructional process by assessing student knowledge, talents, physical disabilities, and learning disabilities. This will determine which objectives and methods will be utilized in delivering a lesson. Lessons are planned with the active participation of the students in mind. After lessons, a review and evaluation of the learning experience is made and revisions are noted in the lesson plan book.

Palmer provides a physical environment that assures students have optimum opportunity to learn. Teachers are versed in teaching to multiple intelligences and determining the student's learning styles. Lessons are taught with a variety of instructional methods. Methods commonly used include: cooperative learning, demonstration, presentation, discovery, exploration, discussion, drill & practice, problem solving, inquiry-based, and learning games. Teachers seek to promote critical thinking, build upon prior knowledge, and provide opportunities for research and the application of knowledge and skills. Lessons are delivered face-to-face, and with the use of technology. Teachers make every effort to collaborate among disciplines and grade levels. Lessons may be for large groups, small groups, or individuals.

One example of instructional methods employed at Palmer is the Kindergarten "Hat Day" project. The Kindergarten teachers collaborated with the media specialist to immerse the students in a day that taught about the letter "H". All Kindergarten activities focused upon using the letter h, listening to and pronouncing its sound, and learning h words and their meanings. Centers, songs, and snacks were planned to support the theme. Students and teachers wore their favorite hats throughout the day. In library, the media specialist read Miss Hunnicutt's Hat and had the students pass a letter H around the circle every time they heard an H word. This kind of immersion in a theme unit, and the wide variety of exposures and instructional methods ensures that students have every opportunity to learn.

Palmer also sponsors a number of yearly field trips and school visitors to incorporate real-life experiences into the curriculum.

Finally, if a Palmer student doesn't respond to traditional classroom instructional methods, Palmer has available a guidance counselor, reading specialist, math tutor, speech specialist, and other private tutors. Struggling students are offered testing, accommodations, and the opportunity to attend specially scheduled tutoring sessions for reading, math and speech. At Palmer Catholic, every effort is made to identify student needs and provide the best learning environment for students regardless of their ability.

**5.** At Palmer, the principal is the teacher's advocate for professional development. Not only does Palmer offer each teacher an educational stipend of \$300. per year, the principal provides information and support to those pursuing higher education. Information from local colleges and universities are distributed to the faculty, and teachers are surveyed to determine interests and goals for professional development. In the past year, two Palmer teachers have received their master's degrees with the aid and encouragement of the principal. Palmer now employs nine teachers with master's degrees and one working towards a PhD. Three more teachers are presently pursuing master's degrees.

Every attempt is made to offer in-service opportunities based on needs assessment and/or testing results, with the intention of improving student achievement. ITBS results are used to develop a School Educational Plan for Palmer. This plan is forwarded to the school superintendent for review, and in-service sessions are developed around the needs identified. Diocesan School Board cluster meetings for principals and school board members are held to discuss in-service opportunities. Professional development is discussed at every faculty meeting. Instructors are frequently invited to the Palmer campus to teach on-site. For example, in the past year, Dr. Robert Taylor, a professor at the University of North Florida presented a program on children's brain development, ADD, and ADHD. Teachers also take advantage of online courses (most recently a reading course) teaming up to work together in Palmer's computer lab.

The technology teacher has offered numerous workshops to teachers. All Palmer teachers are required to pass three levels of technology training, as well as two levels of Catechist training for religious instruction.

In addition, thrice yearly Diocesan in-service meetings offer professional presentations.

Another form of professional development is teacher membership in professional organizations. Many Palmer teachers belong to a variety of professional groups such as; National Catholic Education Association, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, National Science & Technology Council, National Middle School Association, American Library Association, Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, National Council of Social Studies, and ORFF Music Association.

Each new Palmer teacher is assigned a veteran teacher mentor and completes a rigorous mentoring program during her/his first year of teaching.

Finally, the SCRIP fundraiser, directed by the Home School Association offers teachers the opportunity to fund their educations.

All of these professional development experiences support and inspire a faculty that strives to consistently improve their knowledge and skills in order to better teach, guide, and serve their students.

## PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

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1. Private school association(s): Florida Catholic Conference  
(Identify the religious or independent associations, if any, to which the school belongs. List the primary association first.)
2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes X No \_\_\_\_\_
3. What are the 2004-2005 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)  
One child: \$ 3,000 3,000 3,000 3,000 3,000 3,000  
K 1<sup>st</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>  
\$ 3,000 3,000 3,000 n/a n/a n/a  
6<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 11<sup>th</sup>  
\$ n/a n/a  
12<sup>th</sup> Other
4. What is the educational cost per student? \$ 4,390  
(School budget divided by enrollment)
5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$ 1,500
6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction? 7.2%
7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction? 12%

**\*Addendum: Funds are made available to student's families throughout the school year and the school works in collaboration with the parish to insure family needs are met.**

## **PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS**

### **ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS**

**PALMER CATHOLIC ACADEMY**  
**4889 Palm Valley Road**  
**Ponte Vedra Beach, FL**  
**32082**

**Iowa Test of Basic Skills**  
**Form A, 2001**  
**Riverside Publishing**

**Scores are reported here as percentiles**  
**No students are excluded from the test**

	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>
<b>Testing Month</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>Grade 8</b>			
<b>Reading</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>Number of students tested</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Percent of all students tested</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Number of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percent of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>
<b>Testing Month</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>Grade 7</b>			
<b>Reading</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Number of students tested</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Percent of all students tested</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Number of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percent of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>
<b>Testing Month</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>Grade 6</b>			
<b>Reading</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Number of students tested</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Percent of all students tested</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Number of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percent of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>
<b>Testing Month</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>Grade 5</b>			
<b>Reading</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>82</b>
<b>Number of students tested</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Percent of all students tested</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Number of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percent of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>
<b>Testing Month</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>Grade 4</b>			
<b>Reading</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>88</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>Number of students tested</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Percent of all students tested</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Number of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percent of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

	<b>2004-2005</b>	<b>2003-2004</b>	<b>2002-2003</b>
<b>Testing Month</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>	<b>October</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>			
<b>Reading</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>Math</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Number of students tested</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Percent of all students tested</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Number of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percent of student scores excluded</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



**BUILDING SUMMARY**  
*Iowa Tests of Basic Skills® (ITBS®)*

Building: Palmer Catholic Acad 522  
Diocese: St Augustine Diocese 5

Form: A  
Test Date: 10/2004  
Norms: Fall 2000  
Order No.: 000120073  
Page: 4

	READING			Writing	LANGUAGE					MATHEMATICS			CORE Social Studies	Science	SOURCES OF INFORMATION			COMPOSITE
	Vocabulary	Comprehension	TOTAL		Word Analysis	Spelling	Capitalization	Punctuation	Usage & Expression	TOTAL	Concept Estimation	Problem Solving			Computation	TOTAL	Maps & Diagram	
Grade 8	Number of Students Included	38	38	38		38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38	38
	Grade Equivalent of Average SS	11.7	13+	13+		12.3	13+	13+	13+	11.1	13+	13+	13+	13+	13+	13+	13+	
	National Stanine of Average SS	7	7	7		7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	
	Normal Curve Equivalent of Average SS	74	72	73		69	70	72	74	75	66	68	73	68	74	70	67	
	Percentile Rank of Average SS - Private Norms	76	78	79		71	74	77	80	80	72	75	79	75	80	74	72	
	Percentile Rank of Average SS - National Student Norms	87	85	87		82	83	85	87	88	78	80	86	81	88	82	80	
Number of Students Tested = 38																		

For further information on the interpretation of this report, please visit [www.riversidepublishing.com](http://www.riversidepublishing.com) or refer to the Interpretive Guide.